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25 July 1968

CIA Suggestions for Changes in the Acceptance
Criteria for the MACV Order of Battle (OB)

1. Pursuant to earlier discussions between CIA and DIA officials we have reviewed the matter of unit acceptance criteria for the MACV OB. We have drawn up a revised set of criteria for your consideration and, if agreement can be reached, for submission to MACV as an agreed Washington proposal for its consideration.

Current Acceptance Criteria

2. The current criteria for acceptance of units into the MACV OB were devised at the Honolulu Intelligence Conference of February 1967. The criteria, as listed in the April 1968 OB, varied by unit:

a. Confirmed Unit: A confirmed unit is one whose designation is known, its subordination established, and the location determined from a minimum of two reports from VC/NVA POW's or returnees (Hoi Chanh) from the unit, or from captured documents (any combination).

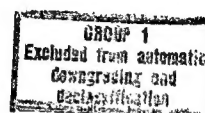
b. Probable Unit: A probable unit is one whose designation is known, its subordination established, and location determined from one VC/NVA POW or returnee (Hoi Chanh) from the unit, or from a captured document, when supported by information from other sources, which can be evaluated as probably true.

c. Possible Unit: A possible unit is accepted as such where repeated reports from different sources indicate that the unit exists, even though no VC/NVA POW's or returnees (Hoi Chanh) from the unit or captured documents are available to verify the reports.

d. Reported Unit: A reported unit is one which has been mentioned in agent reports, captured documents, or interrogation reports, but the available information is insufficient to include the unit in accepted OB holdings.

Recommended Acceptance Criteria

3. The CIA recommends that the unit criteria be revised to read as follows:

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a. Confirmed Unit: A confirmed unit is one whose designation is known, subordination established and location determined by direct evidence, including captured documents and POW or rallier reports or other high validity sources.

b. Possible Unit: A possible unit is accepted as such where information from different sources or analytical inference suggest the unit exists, even though direct evidence may be unavailable.

c. Reported Unit: A reported unit is one which has been mentioned in one or more sources of intelligence information, but the evidence is not judged sufficient to include the unit in accepted OB holdings.

4. The basic purpose of the proposed changes in criteria is to help eliminate one of the fundamental causes of differences in OB holdings -- that is the rigidity imposed on OB maintenance by the strict acceptance criteria currently used by MACV. The changes are designed generally to enable quicker acceptance of units and to broaden the information base that can be used for their identification and inclusion in the order of battle. Adoption of the changes should help in narrowing the differences between assessments based on conventional OB maintenance techniques and those derived by estimative techniques. Specific comments on the changes follow.

Confirmed Units

5. The revised criteria for Confirmed Units, eliminates the rigid insistence on "a minimum of two reports from VC/NVA POW's or returnees (Hoi Chanh) from the unit, or from captured documents (any combination)". The new criteria merely require that a "confirmed unit" be evidenced by direct information "including captured documents and POW and rallier reports". The change is recommended for the following reasons:

a. A requirement of "two" reports from captured documents, POW's or ralliers seems unduly rigid. One might, for example, have a situation where only one prisoner was available, but he would be of sufficient rank and competence that his testimony would be sufficient to acceptance of the existence of several other units. Colonel Ngot, ex-deputy commander of the Fifth Front (Subregion 5) -- now in Allied hands is an example of such a prisoner.

b. The current criteria excludes consideration of COMINT evidence, however abundant. The recommended criteria would allow a unit to be "confirmed" by such evidence.

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Probable Units

6. We recommend that this category be dropped because it is so seldom used. The April 1968 OB, for example, carried only 800 soldiers as "probable". We feel that these soldiers might just as well be carried in the "confirmed" or "possible" categories, thus simplifying MACV's bookkeeping problems.

Possible Units

7. Our recommended change in this criteria drops the current insistence that such units be evidenced by "repeated reports," and allows for greater analytical flexibility. It would allow the acceptance into the OB as "possible", for example, of a medical battalion attached to a division, although no documentary evidence was received as to its existence. Inclusion of such a battalion in the OB is a valid example of "analytical inference," based on the fact that a VC/NVA division might normally be expected to have a medical battalion. The criteria would also allow for inclusion in the OB of units even though the only evidence available was a single but high validity agent report. Finally, our criteria would allow for inclusion in the OB as "possible" of large numbers of smaller units, for which documentary evidence is limited.

Reported Units

8. We have changed this criteria slightly to permit the inclusion in this category of units evidenced in COMINT only.

9. With respect to the category "Reported Units" we also suggested that consideration be given to dropping it completely. As defined, it has little relevance in terms of formal criteria since units in the category are (quite properly) excluded from OB listings.

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TO: LT. GEN. JOSEPH F. CARROLL
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
ROOM 3E258, THE PENTAGON

FROM: PAUL V. WALSH
DD/OER
Room 4F-18 Hqs.

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DIAAP-4A, ROOM 1C942
THE PENTAGON

Criteria

LDX'2 on 26 July 68.